

CD/PV.58
12 February 1980
ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE FIFTY-EIGHTH MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 12 February 1980, at 3.30 p.m.

Chairman:

Mr. D.S. McPhail

(Canada)

PRESENT AT THE TABLE

Algeria: Mr. A. BENYAHIA
Mr. N. TERKI

Argentina: Mr. A. DUMONT
Miss N. FREYRE PENABAD

Australia: Sir James PLIMSOLL
Mr. A. BEHM
Ms. M. WICKES

Belgium: Mr. J.-M. NOIRFALISSE

Brazil: Mr. C.A. DE SOUZA E SILVA

Bulgaria: Mr. P. VOUTOV
Mr. S. STAIKOV
Mr. B. GRINBERG
Mr. I. SOTIROV
Mr. P. POPCHEV
Mr. K. PRAMOV

Burma: U SAW HLAING
U NGWE WIN

Canada: Mr. D.S. McPHAIL
Mr. G.A.H. PEARSON

China: Mr. YU Pei-Win
Mr. LIANG Yu-Fan
Mr. YANG Hu-Shan
Mr. LUO Ren-Shi

Cuba: Mr. L.A. BARRERAS CAÑIZO
Mr. A. JIMENEZ GONZALEZ

Czechoslovakia: Mr. P. LUKES
Mr. E. ZÁPOTOCKÝ
Mr. J. JIRUŠEK

Egypt: Mr. M. EL-BARADEI
Mr. N. FAHMY

Ethopia: Mr. F. YOHANNES

France: Mr. M. COUTHURES

German Democratic Republic: Mr. G. HERDER
Mr. M. GRACZYNSKI
Mr. KAULFUSS

Germany, Federal Republic of: Mr. G. PFEIFFER
Mr. N. KLINGLER

Hungary: Mr. I. KÓMIVES
Mr. C. GYÖRFFY
Mr. A. LAKATOS

India: Mr. S. SARAN

Indonesia Mr. S. DARUSMAN
Mr. I.M. DAMANIK

Iran: Mr. D. AMERI

Italy: Mr. V. CORDERO DI MONTEZEMOLO
Mr. M. MORENO
Mr. C. FRATESCHI
Mr. F. DE LUCA

Japan: Mr. Y. OKAWA
Mr. T. NONOYAMA
Mr. R. ISHII
Mr. M. MIYATA

Kenya: Mr. G.N. MUNIU

Mexico: Mr. A. GARCÍA ROBLES
Mr. M.A. CÁCERES

Mongolia: Mr. D. ERDEMBILEG

Morocco: Mr. M. CHRAIBI

Netherlands: Mr. H. WAGENMAKERS

Nigeria: Mr. O. ADENIJI
Mr. T.O. OLUMOKO

Pakistan: Mr. A.A. HASHMI

Peru: Mr. J. AURICH MONTERO

Poland: Mr. B. SUJKA
Mr. H. PAĆ
Mr. J. CIALOWICZ
Mr. S. KONIK

Romania: Mr. C. ENE
Mr. O. IONESCU

Sri Lanka: Mr. I.B. FONSEKA

Sweden:

Mr. C. LIDGARD
Mr. B. SKALA
Mr. L. NORBERG
Mr. S. STRÖMBÄCK
Mrs. G. JONANG

Union of Soviet Socialist
Republics:

Mr. Y.K. NAZARKIN
Mr. V.I. USTINOV

United Kingdom:

Mr. N.H. MARSHALL

United States of America:

Mr. A.S. FISHER
Mr. A. AKALOVSKY
Mr. M. SANCHES
Mr. P. SALGADO
Mr. J. CALVERT

Venezuela:

Mr. A.R. TAYLHARDAT
Mrs. R. MUGICA DE ADAMES

Yugoslavia:

Mr. D. DJOKIĆ
Mr. M. MTHAJLOVIĆ

Zaire:

Mr. KALONJI TSHIKALA KAKWAKA

Secretary to the Committee
on Disarmament and Personal
Representative of the
Secretary-General:

Mr. R. JAIPAL

Mr. PEARSON (Canada): Canada continues to believe that disarmament negotiations should be vigorously pursued, and that the Committee on Disarmament is the focal point for multilateral negotiations. Nothing that has happened since the first session of the Committee in 1979 alters the facts that world military expenditures continue to increase, that new and more advanced weapons continue to be designed and produced, and that the threat of nuclear war is ever present. Negotiations outside this Committee should also be pursued, in our view, wherever and whenever there is a mutual interest in lower levels of armaments at equal levels of security. We believe it is right that, in principle, the states concerned should keep the Committee informed of these negotiations.

Canada also believes, however, that negotiations on disarmament will only succeed if there is some degree of trust and confidence between the States involved. Acts of aggression or of intervention in the affairs of other States undermine such confidence and thus make more difficult the reaching of agreements on arms limitation and disarmament. We are reminded once again that this process cannot be divorced from politics among nations and in particular among nations which carry special responsibilities for the control and reduction of armaments. If agreements do not appear to lead to equal security they will not be made. Adequate verification of capabilities is important in bringing about confidence, but so too is the perception of intentions. It is the use of military capabilities for aggressive purposes rather than their existence that does most to weaken the confidence of which I speak as a vital ingredient for the success of negotiations on disarmament.

It is abundantly clear that trust and confidence have been shaken by recent events in Afghanistan. The fact that the Treaty on the Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms has yet to enter into force is testimony to this fact. My Government nevertheless welcomes indications that the USSR and the United States will act in conformity with the provisions of the Treaty until such time as definitive action can be taken to bring it into force.

We hope, too, that negotiations on the limitation of theatre nuclear weapons in Europe will begin soon. We do not accept the view expressed here by some delegations that the decision by NATO to modernize its theatre nuclear forces

(Mr. Pearson, Canada)

destroys the basis for such negotiations. The NATO ministerial communiqué of 12 December 1979 contains an open invitation to negotiate on these matters. If it were seriously believed that any decision by one side or the other to modernize its military forces made impossible the opening of negotiations on arms control, such negotiations would never begin. This has not been the case in the past. It is not the case now. NATO Ministers have indicated their willingness to negotiate, despite the fact that the Soviet Union is engaged in a qualitative and quantitative reinforcement of its theatre nuclear forces. NATO is not seeking superiority. The history of arms control has shown that when negotiations begin from positions of relative equality, the prospects for success are best. The fact that military capabilities are continually increasing is all the more reason to put in place agreed arrangements to limit and reduce those capabilities.

Let me turn to our agenda. My Government agrees that the six points of the agenda for last year should again be considered with the addition of the item on a comprehensive programme of disarmament.

We welcome the resumption of the trilateral negotiations on a nuclear test ban, and we believe the Committee should have an exchange of views on this subject early in its work. It is true that such views are becoming tedious in the absence of a text which can form the basis for our work. But the fact that all nuclear-weapon States are now around this table is alone reason enough to return to it.

It is our hope that the three negotiating Powers will make a substantive report to the Committee after the current round of talks, and that this report, in addition to the report of the Group of Seismic Experts and the report on a nuclear-test ban commissioned by the thirty-fourth session of the Assembly, will enable the Committee to have a second and more fruitful exchange of views before the end of the first part of its session in April.

We take a somewhat different view of the role of the Committee on Disarmament in negotiating a Chemical Weapons Treaty. Last year we supported the establishment of an ad hoc group and suggested it might begin by reviewing the areas of common ground that have emerged so far in the bilateral discussions. While we were not able to reach agreement to establish such a group, a useful discussion took place in the Committee which is summarized in the paper submitted

(Mr. Pearson, Canada)

by France, Italy and the Netherlands on 13 August 1979 (CD/52). A treaty prohibiting chemical weapons, particularly in its arrangements for verification, would imply significant obligations for States parties. It is important therefore that the Committee try to come to an agreement on the mandate for an ad hoc group which bears this in mind. The answers to the helpful questionnaire circulated by our Netherlands colleague last summer suggest a good deal of general agreement on types of verification required, but also that much remains unclear. At the least we think that a working group should explore whether consensus exists on the main elements of a convention. The agreed framework would pave the way for further work.

The subject of security assurances by nuclear-weapon States also deserves high priority. The fact that three separate resolutions were adopted at the thirty-fourth session of the United Nations General Assembly on strengthening the security of non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, and that none of them was supported by all the nuclear-weapon States, is evidence enough that the subject is both urgent and divisive. Whatever progress we can make, however, would contribute to the carrying out of obligations assumed by nuclear-weapon States under the NPT. The outlook for real measures of nuclear disarmament being agreed soon is, if anything, worse than it was a year ago. Acceptable international arrangements for strengthening the security of non-nuclear-weapon States would provide modest compensation, although in no sense a substitute, for this absence of concrete steps towards nuclear disarmament.

My delegation has an open mind about the nature of the international arrangements to serve the purpose in view. In any event, we believe that such arrangements should define the notion of "non-nuclear-weapon State" in a way satisfactory to all concerned, including Canada. Such a definition, once accepted, would have to be acknowledged in some form, just as the assurance against attack would need to be acknowledged, whether the vehicle is a convention or some other international instrument of a less formal character. It seems to us doubtful, given the views already expressed in the Committee, that a joint guarantee by the nuclear-weapon States is going to be feasible, and it would not in any case be desirable if it were to weaken the assurances already given.

(Mr. Pearson, Canada)

Turning to the fourth topic which the Assembly has described as one of high priority -- nuclear disarmament -- my delegation notes that two nuclear-weapon States voted against resolution 34/83 J on this subject, and that one did not participate in the vote. This result confirms what we already know from our discussion last year: there is complete absence of agreement amongst the States principally concerned as to how to proceed with negotiations on the cessation of the nuclear-arms race. In these circumstances no useful purpose is likely to be served by the creation of a working group. Instead, my delegation would find it more profitable to devote a number of informal meetings to the subject, as was done last year. These meetings could also allow discussion of views on the non-use of nuclear weapons and on the prohibition of the production of fissionable material for weapons purposes, two subjects that are before this Committee as a result of recommendations made by the General Assembly.

The negotiation of a multilateral convention on radiological weapons is desirable because it is feasible. These weapons are not threats to our security in the same sense as nuclear weapons or chemical weapons. But we and others have long argued that the development of new weapons of mass destruction must be stopped before they go into production. Moreover, the Committee on Disarmament will have little to claim for its efforts if it does not negotiate what is negotiable and prefers to debate the non-negotiable.

We shall support, too, the establishment of a working group at a later stage of our work on the comprehensive programme on disarmament. A CPD would have the advantage of relating partial measures of disarmament both to each other and to the wider security agreements which must be reached if disarmament is ever to lead, step by step, to a safer and more law-abiding world. The Committee must sooner or later make a start on all the items on its permanent agenda. So far we have touched only on the first three items, important as these are. A CPD is listed as the last of the ten areas of work agreed a year ago. But such a programme in fact covers all the other areas of work. To begin consideration of it soon implies that we shall have to come to grips with the relationship between nuclear and non-nuclear disarmament, which is the heart of the problem of general and complete disarmament.

Mr. DARUSIAI (Indonesia): Since it is the first time my delegation takes the floor, permit me to extend to you, Sir, my warm congratulations, both as the leader of the Canadian delegation and as Chairman of this Committee for this month. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the outgoing Chairman, Ambassador Hlaing of Burma, for the manner in which he has conducted the proceedings during his tenure as Chairman of this Committee, and the wisdom he has shown during our last deliberations.

I also wish to extend a warm welcome to the distinguished representatives of Algeria, Belgium, Hungary, Japan and Zaire.

This year signals the second year that the Committee on Disarmament, as the single multilateral negotiating body, will again undertake attempts to find ways and means to arrive at agreements which may ultimately lead to general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

As we are to begin with our work, my delegation is happy to note that China has decided to participate in the work of this Committee. We welcome this development and we are looking forward to their constructive contributions. The participation of all permanent members of the Security Council in the Disarmament Committee is a conditio sine qua non if we are to arrive at meaningful results, especially in the nuclear field.

It is only fair to expect, that having been endowed with privileges in their capacity as permanent members of the Security Council, they should, individually and collectively, readily assume greater responsibility than other Members of the United Nations in our common search for the maintenance and strengthening of international peace and security.

When the Committee initiated its task last year, all members were hopeful that agreements on some concrete disarmament measures would be possible to achieve, because they felt that the international situation lent itself favourably to such efforts. These expectations did not, however, materialize.

(Mr. Darusman, Indonesia)

Recent developments in the international situation have confused, if not grieved, the minds of all of us who were prepared to put a minimum of hope in the preservation of détente -- no matter how fragile. Initial reactions to what has transpired were those of profound shock, disbelief and indignation. It would therefore emotionally be understandable if shattered credibility and utter disappointment have brought out less constructive impulses, such as the abandonment of current efforts to arrest the process of disintegration of political morals, and to regard the search for disarmament as a completely futile exercise. However, the realization that the alternatives to such humanitarian efforts like disarmament are too terrifying for mankind to face has led to the conclusion that there is no other choice except to continue the task entrusted to this Committee, no matter the setbacks, no matter the frustrations. And in the light of the uncertainties of political compartments of nations living under conditions of constant mutual distrust, in an atmosphere loaded with risks of sudden outbreaks of armed violence, this Committee is under even greater obligation to strive more vigorously to live up to its task.

Therefore, my delegation together with other members of this Committee, in particular, the Group of 21, urgently calls on all militarily significant States to make special efforts in order to save the present prevailing international situation from becoming worse. At this critical point in time, real political will is urgently needed, and this could be manifested in all international fora, bilateral, trilateral and multilateral. In the Committee on Disarmament this could be demonstrated by their sincere willingness to embark on negotiations on substantive elements of certain disarmament measures which have been for many years the subject of discussion.

In this initial statement during the current session, my delegation would like to limit itself to some brief comments in a general way. My delegation

(Mr. Darusman, Indonesia)

feels that negotiations on a comprehensive test ban should continue within the framework of our Committee and as a matter of urgency. Progress on this issue is a vital element for the success of efforts to prevent both vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons, and will contribute towards an end to the arms race. We view with concern the delay in coming to grips with this question. A comprehensive test ban must be of indefinite duration, truly comprehensive without any loopholes, and contain adequate measures to ensure that all parties could participate in a meaningful way in the verification process.

We find it necessary to reiterate that the Committee has a vital role to play in achieving a chemical weapons convention. A prohibition of these weapons would be a significant accomplishment of this Committee. We therefore hope that discussions can be continued on the basis not only of the joint United States-USSR report but also of other proposals submitted or which might emerge in the subsequent negotiations in this Committee. A working group, the establishment of which we find desirable, can deal with the implications of this problem and thus facilitate its solution.

The need for an international convention to assure the non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons has long been evident to allay the legitimate concern of all States in ensuring their security. This concern has become even greater as a result of the continuation of the nuclear arms race and of the threat to mankind due to the possibility of the use of nuclear weapons. The importance of safeguarding the territorial integrity and sovereignty of non-nuclear-weapon States cannot be overemphasized. An international convention in this context would also constitute a significant contribution to the prevention of the spread of nuclear arms. The establishment of a working group for this purpose will hopefully enable this Committee to arrive at an agreed solution.

We are gratified to note that in another class of weapons, namely radiological weapons, significant progress has been achieved. My delegation is happy to note the existence of elements of a draft treaty to ban radiological weapons. The destructive effects of these weapons have long been recognized, as well as the potential dangers inherent in the use of radioactive materials.

(Mr. Darusman, Indonesia)

Among other priority issues requiring our attention at an appropriate stage are those relating to the non-use of nuclear weapons and the prevention of nuclear war; the question of the cessation and prohibition of the production of fissionable materials for weapons purposes and a comprehensive programme of disarmament.

A number of delegations have spoken about general and complete disarmament in its relevance to their respective regions. I may perhaps for completeness' sake devote a few lines to the situation in South-East Asia, where the need to remove threats of an escalating war are just as acute, since no solution has as yet been found to ease the political and military confrontation in Indo-China. Notwithstanding the military overtones of the conflicts prevailing in the area, efforts towards finding peaceful solutions are still being continued through contacts and dialogues between the parties concerned. Here ASEAN (The Association of South-East Asian Nations, consisting of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand) has contributed positively to the search for a non-military way out of the existing tensions. In line with disarmament activities elsewhere, the establishment of a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality for the area is an objective of ASEAN. This undertaking was noted by the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and was contained in its Final Document.

We hope that on the questions raised earlier, negotiations would be conducted on the basis of equality and directed toward specific matters of particular importance. We are determined to continue the search for effective means to arrest the arms race, to expedite negotiations and to strive for new, practical disarmament measures. Thus, it should be possible for this Committee to report to the forthcoming session of the General Assembly that some concrete results have been achieved, demonstrating the existence of a political will and a spirit of co-operation amongst us.

Sir James PLIMSOLL (Australia): I have circulated a document, which has been numbered by the Secretariat CD/59, on chemical weapons. The Australian delegation proposed last year that there should be some meeting between members of this Committee and experts on technical weapons from individual delegations. I mentioned it again in my speech at the opening of this general debate. We have had consultations on the subject last year and during this session with some of the delegations here, and we have found that there is widespread agreement with the proposal. But some delegations have asked that, after we had these consultations, we should circulate a piece of paper so that they might have more precisely what is in our minds in the light of views expressed by other delegations. That is set out in CD/59.

The purpose of our proposal is to enable delegations here -- representatives and their staff -- to have a greater technical awareness of some of the problems involved in chemical weapons. Now some delegations here will have their own experts, others may not; some may have experts in particular aspects of chemical weapons and not in other aspects. In any case there is advantage, I think, in having the experts have a dialogue in front of the Committee and sometimes with questions and discussion from members of the Committee, so that the whole range and complexity and implications of different aspects of our work on chemical weapons are opened out for wider discussion and eventual negotiation. That is what our proposal is. Now I would say, I want to make quite clear, that this is not a working group, not a substitute for a working group. It is something that would help members of the Committee in their discussions in formal plenary meetings, in informal meetings, or in working groups. It is designed to help each of us to have full advantage of the fact that there will be present at some time here in Geneva experts from a number of delegations from all the political and geographical groups in this Committee.

The Australian delegation, as I have said, has had consultations with a number of delegations. We have had views expressed to us and we have tried to take account of them in this piece of paper. I think the stage has now been reached where the Chairman of the Committee and the Secretary of the Committee have to take the matter in hand. It is now up to them, I think, to move on from here and, provided the Committee has no objection, pull things together and arrange

(Sir James Plimsoll, Australia)

informal meetings of the sort that we propose. What needs to be decided -- and this I think the Chairman and the Secretary will have to work out in consultation with members of the Committee -- is the date of the meeting, the subjects to be covered in the meetings, and what experts are going to be available from various member countries of this Committee. We have suggested in CD/59 six subjects, but there might be others. This, we say, is an illustrative list only. There may be other subjects to be discussed. There may be different subjects to be discussed. There may be several experts from several countries for some of these. I suggest that this is a matter now for the Chairman and the Secretary. Therefore we circulate this paper CD/59 to make it clear to the Committee as a whole, in a more precise way, what we have in mind as the result of the consultations we have already had.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Australia, and I am certain that members of the Committee will find the document which has been circulated as CD/59 very useful. I would assume that members of the Committee would like an opportunity to study the proposals therein; perhaps even to seek guidance from their Governments. It seems to me, however, that in terms of procedure, if the Committee agrees, it would be better if we concentrate on the adoption of our agenda and work programme. Then, immediately afterwards, during an informal meeting to discuss our work schedule, the Committee would decide what should be done to pursue this proposal; assuming that this is the wish of the Committee to pursue it. In the meantime, as the representative of Australia has suggested, the members of the Committee could indeed think about possible dates and subjects as well as the kind of experts, required or desirable. The Chair would also be ready to consult with delegations, to obtain their reaction, in order to be able to reflect such additional views as there may be when the subject is discussed. I think that this is probably the best way in which the Chair can fulfil the request of the delegation of Australia, as I think the Committee itself is not yet ready to take a decision. Instead, we could all obtain such advice as we need, and to consider the likelihood of an informal meeting on this subject next week, if our hopes of adopting the agenda and programme of work are realized. At that time we could take a decision. Would this suggestion be acceptable to the delegation of Australia and to other members of the Committee?

Sir James PLIMSOLL (Australia): Mr. Chairman, broadly, I am in agreement with what you have said, but I think that before the Committee makes the decision that you have suggested, you might like to discuss the details that I mentioned with some delegations. For example, the date, the subject headings and who would be available. Particularly, on the latter point, I think a number of countries represented in this Committee might be interested in providing experts. It would therefore be useful I think, if some of that exploratory work were done by you and the Secretary before the Committee makes a final decision.

The CHAIRMAN: Certainly, if there is no objection, both I and Ambassador Jaipal would be pleased, I am sure, to consider ourselves seized of your request to prepare ourselves through consultation, so that when the informal meeting to consider this subject begins, we can put forward a synthesis of views. I have to say that while we will do our best to initiate such consultation with interested delegations, we must, with a 40-member Committee, rely upon the members themselves to ensure that we know they have some views to put to us. I think it is a matter of two-way communication. We will therefore do our best to initiate consultations, but we do invite delegations to make certain that they put their views to us in the course of the next five working days. I think that should be an initial target. We will have to decide later, precisely when we take up this matter in an informal meeting.

Are there other comments on this suggestion?

Mr. ADENIJI (Nigeria): Mr. Chairman, since you said this would be discussed later of course, my delegation will reserve any comments of substance it may have on this. However, it has just occurred to me that in the paper, a delegation has been quoted as being kind enough to put chemical weapons protective equipment on display during the seminar. I thought that perhaps another delegation, in the course of your consultations, would wish to complement this, by also providing a display of chemical weapons themselves.

The CHAIRMAN: I am sure the Committee is open to all suggestions.

Could we therefore leave the Australian proposition in that manner? The Chair will consult, and will expect members to approach it so that once we have

(The Chairman)

adopted the agenda and work programme, assuming that is within a reasonably short period of time, we will consider how best to follow up on this proposal in an informal meeting.

Does any other delegation wish to speak? Before adjourning this plenary meeting, may I recall that the Committee will meet in an informal meeting to continue its consideration of the provisional agenda and the programme of work. Because of the length of our speakers list, I would propose that the next plenary meeting take place on Thursday, 14 February at 10.00 a.m. Also, the succeeding plenary meeting in the afternoon would begin at 3.00 p.m.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.